



# State of Connecticut

## SENATE

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February 17, 2009

Chairman Edwin Gomes, Chairman Kenneth P. Green, Ranking Member John McKinney, Ranking Member Lawrence Miller and other distinguished Members of the Joint Committee on Housing

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of *SB 206, An Act Concerning Moratoriums on Affordable Housing Applications*, and *SB 208, An Act Concerning the Determination of the Number of Affordable Housing Units in a Municipality*.

The Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure – general statute, section 8-30g – made historic changes in the way courts review municipal zoning decisions concerning affordable housing. Since its enactment, many affordable dwelling have been created. However, some bad practices and unintended consequences have also emerged. Affordable housing developers can override municipal planning and zone laws if a town's affordable housing stock is less than ten percent. Developers can appeal a denial by the local authorities and bring the decision before the courts. Unfortunately, many developers use this general statute as away to build costly dense housing anywhere in towns across Connecticut- without regard to the town's development plan.

SB 206 amends the statutes to award one-housing equivalent point to elderly housing units and define the median income to be the local median income. Designating affordable units in place where they now exist gives towns more say in where affordable housing developments are placed and allow the affordable housing units to conform more appropriately to the town's development plan. Many towns have made great progress in meeting the high demand for affordable elderly housing that has enabled our low-income seniors to remain, in many cases, in the towns where they have raised children and contribute their time and money.

In addition, Connecticut has 169 unique towns, each with different characteristics and identities. Each town has a different median income, and the statute should redefine median income to local median income. The General Assembly should be sensitive to sprawl and unsound zoning projects that threaten the environment and historic landscape due to a formula that does not take under consideration the uniqueness of each community and policies that promote smart growth.

SB 208 amends the statutes to authorize municipalities to include existing affordable apartments and accessory apartments in meeting the threshold for affordable housing units. There are a substantial number of affordable dwellings in many towns across Connecticut that are not calculated in the current 10% threshold requirement for affordable housing. Accessory apartments currently occupied and rented that fall within the guidelines of "affordable" should be included so that the state has a more realistic inventory of its affordable dwelling units.

I understand the very difficult and competing interests that this issue present and thank you for your thoughtful and careful consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Toni Boucher  
State Senator

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